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ABSTRACT

There are three serious impediments to the acceptance of voice as a practical focus in the college writing classroom: the attitudes and beliefs of educators; the theories guiding classroom practices; and the classroom practices themselves. A means of overcoming these impediments and of ensuring that students will discover and develop the power of their own voice is the Story Workshop approach which creates a firm context for eliciting voice and developing its many extensions. A semicircular arrangement of chairs enhances listening and use of immediate peer audience factors in oral and written exercises, and a sequenced syllabus moves students from more familiar basic forms that call forth naturally their own distinct and most-often-used voices to forms placing an increasing demand upon more conceptual capabilities. A basic format moves through a series of activities that build sequentially: a recall of vivid images or moments from work read or told in the previous class; oral reading of published models; recall and comment on oral reading, word exercises, oral telling, in-class writing of what was told orally; read-back of the in-class writing; and a final recall. In each activity, the teacher coaches, creates the enabling atmosphere of guided discovery, and thus fosters each student's perceptions about his or her authentic telling and writing voice. (Attached appendixes include samples of student writing, a Story Workshop bibliography and a model of a basic class format.) (KEH)

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NO MORE LIP SERVICE. VOICE AS EMPOWERMENT IN A STORY WORKSHOP COMPOSITION CLASS

I am happy to be here today for at least two reasons. First, after the jaw-locking cold of a Chicago winter, being in a city where I can speak without seeing my breath is the closest I've been to ecstasy since I turned in my end-of-semester grades. Second, it's a pleasure to trade ideas with teachers representing so many different institutions and levels of language instruction, and I look forward to our dialogue this afternoon as we focus on the issue of voice as a means to empowerment.

Last summer, as I was scanning the plethora of articles pouring out of Seoul recounting the athletic and fashion prowess of the Olympic teams, my eye lighted on a small item buried on the back page of the Chicago Tribune that immediately leaped out at me as instructive for teachers of writing. The story detailed the training regimen inflicted upon members of the Korean judo team, activities which, as might be expected, they did not entirely relish--running, weight lifting, head-to-head competition where the loser was threatened with perpetual disgrace to his family, those sorts of things. But it seems that the part of the training they approached with particular distaste came at the end of the day. As night fell, they were bused to a nearby cemetary. There they were told to disperse among the graves and contemplate their futures.

Without allegorizing, we might nonetheless ask ourselves: Does this scenario in any way resemble our own classrooms? In our attempt to

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prepare students for hand-to-paper combat, do we drive them through rigorous mental and verbal calisthenics, threatening them with bringing disgrace upon themselves and their progeny when they fail to match our high standards? And when we have released them into the darkness of their rooms to contemplate the terror of the blank page, do we wonder why, after all our prodding and encouragement, they return with shaken visages and shakier writing--or worse, why they never make it back to the bus at all, ~~but~~ simply disappear in the night?

If Seoul seems a roundabout way of getting to the topic at hand, I would remind you that no shortcuts exist in leading students to become competent, empowered writers either, and that, as the Zen koan says, in order to reach the light we must be willing to descend even into the blue dragon's cave! The graveyard, the blue dragon's cave, and the composition classroom are all places where empowerment is tested, where we and our students discover whether we have the resources to triumph over forces threatening terror and confusion. In the next few minutes, I would like, first, to outline briefly some sources of confusion inhibiting our productive use of voice to empower student writers, and, second, to offer some specific classroom techniques used in the Story Workshop approach to ensure that students will discover and develop the power of their own voices.

In the Story Workshop^{R} approach, first developed in 1965 by John Schultz to meet the needs of open-admissions students from widely varying backgrounds and skills levels at Columbia College, voice assumes a central place, along with image, in developing skills among less experienced writers as well as in enabling increasing variation and sophistication among more advanced writers of fiction and nonfiction. It thus becomes a central

source of empowerment for students seeking confidence and competence in the array of writing and problem-solving tasks they face in and out of the classroom. Schultz writes:

> Used in class sessions and one to one tutorial sessions, the Story Workshop approach assumes that all forms of writing derive from image and story, from image and movement of voice organizing the expression of perceptions through time. The development of these human perceptual, imaginative, and verbal capacities through their many derivations in oral and written forms is always the Story Workshop objective. ("The Story Workshop Method; Writing From Start to Finish" 411)

Now used in many colleges and high schools across the country, this approach has shown its effectiveness in a number of ways. The Columbia College anthology of student writing, Hair Trigger, unique in offering a wide range of voices, content, and forms from freshmen as well as more advanced writers, has twice won the Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines award as the top collection of student writing in the country. In the Dallas Community College system, a rigorous post-test measuring analytic and conceptual as well as so-called "basic" skills has revealed for a number of years that 90-95% of students in Story Workshop composition classes pass while only 50-70% of students from other classes pass. And in research particularly telling about students' own perceptions of the relationship between voice and empowerment, Zoe Keithley has found that in Story Workshop freshman composition classes at Columbia, students overwhelmingly cited activities and coachings directly bearing upon voice and voice acceptance as those most beneficial to developing their writing, and as primarily responsible for greater confidence in approaching writing tasks of all kinds (2-4).

Results such as these give us hope of responding to Geneva Smitherman's urgent call to see language instruction within the wider context of empowerment. In her January, 1987, College English opinion essay, "Towards a National Public Policy on Language," she challenges us to reject the narrow focus upon "correctness" as a definition of writing competence in favor of a focus upon a "language of wider communication" emphasizing "the use of language as power"; and she lays much of the blame for our failure to retain and empower students at our own classroom doors:

> If today's speakers of non-mainstream languages and dialects are rejecting the teaching of standard English, if indeed, as Labov has suggested from his recent Philadelphia study, Black English is diverging from the language of wider communication, particularly among the Black underclass, it may be, in large measure, because educational institutions have never seriously accepted the mother tongue of the speech community. They've paid lip service to it, but they have not really accepted it. (32)

Smitherman's statement prompts questions that all of us must attempt to answer, not simply teachers of minority students or those educators back at the bus sadly scratching their heads in confusion over the fates of students who see the writing classroom not as a space for liberation but rather as a dark graveyard, or killing floor. Why, despite the Ann Arbor case, despite the CCCC Students' Right to Their Own Language policy statement, and despite a great deal of sociolinguistic and composition research, do teachers find themselves in the uncomfortable, and unaccountable, position of paying lip service to democracy without truly effecting that democracy in the composition classroom? What accounts for the failure to accept and use the richness of the mother tongue, building upon the points of contact between mainstream and non-mainstream languages, and between standard and non-standard English dialects? What,

ultimately, will be the results for our schools and our nation if we fail to foster oral and written competence in the language of wider communication with students of all backgrounds?

We can immediately identify at least three sources of impediments, three possible causes for proclamations of acceptance to ring hollowly as lip service: our attitudes and beliefs, the theories guiding our classroom practices, and the classroom practices themselves--which I will designate, somewhat loosely, as Political, Theoretical, and Pedagogical.

I label the first category Political in order to call attention to the way in which issues of voice acceptance and empowerment in the classroom are related to wider issues of power in society. They include impediments to voice acceptance born of conscious or unconscious cultural, racial, ethnic, linguistic, and socio-economic biases. I do not have to tell you that as much as teachers would like to affirm both the value of cultural diversity and the uniqueness of each individual in their classroom, they are often under incredible pressure to assert the need for assimilation and for conformity to prestige values and standards. The push for a truly "American" national language or cultural literacy--and I would remind you that Hirsch's book is subtitled "What Every American Needs to Know," suggesting that anyone who doesn't command the items on his list is not a <u>real</u> American--is one that largely exludes non-male, non-white, non-mainstream speakers and thinkers. Coupled with testing programs often designed less to help students succeed than to ensure that they fish or cut bait, these movements lead teachers to feel divided or confused over the issue of language and voice acceptance. Despite those who have shown that every age has had its literacy crisis (see Sledd), or those who question the very roots and utility of canon formation, despite the New Zealand study of

Elley and his associates detailing the essential futility of current-traditional and "language-based" approaches to composition, and despite the experience of many of us who see that competence in standard English and in conceptual/analytic skills is best developed by building upon connections between oral and written discourse, many teachers find it difficult to resist the rote drill and back-to-basics techniques leading students in record numbers to decide that the fish is too big, none too tasty at that, and that the bait needs cutting.

Voice is a basis for connecting a student's own culture and language features with those of the dominant culture. By treating voice not as something to be whitewashed but rather as the source for widening language options, we answer those who would reduce linguistic, conceptual, and rhetorical power to a matter of form and correctness--the correct use of the semi-colon, the correct form of the verb <u>to be</u>, the correct version of freedom and the happiness to be pursued--and resist being caught up in morally-loaded, either/or discussions about whether students should be allowed to write in their own dialects <u>or</u> must leave their most readily accessible repertoire of communication skills behind at the classroom door in order to learn what amounts to a new language. Above all, we do not forget that language is connected to a speaker whose empowerment involves an interaction between personal and social forces. Lacking the focus upon voice, we risk finding ourselves in the position of Henry Higgins, trying to change Eliza's language without acknowledging Eliza herself, except to bemoan her poor upbringing and her shoddy education. Reductionism results in mutual diminishment, of Eliza and ourselves, and leaves us worlds away from real empowerment.

A second source of impediments is founded upon theoretical disagreements and confusion over the nature and function of voice in writing intruction. Let me simply list a few of what I see as the most significant critiques of voice, since they constitute the primary sources of theoretical resistance to acceptance.

Some have attacked the term "voice" itself as metaphorical, and thus unhelpful to students--for example, Hashimoto (79), who castigates Elbow's denomination of voice as "juice," possessing qualities of "magic potion, mother's milk, and electricity" (281-86). Others--as even a cursory examination of writing texts reveals--reduce it to style or tone or attitude or some other single attribute. Still others lump voice with "expressionism" and a neo-Romantic view of the self as isolated from the social context in which language is largely formed, asserting (when they treat it at all) that it might be fine for personal narrative but is unsuited or even contradictory to development of conceptual/analytic thought and writing (see Berlin).

Time permits me to respond only briefly to these critiques, but I should like to note a few points. The metaphors used to describe voice, however vague or "unscientific" they may appear, do counter the reductionist tendency to define it neatly as style or tone or whatever. In other words, the suggestiveness of metaphor at least has the advantage of indicating its inclusiveness. However, to these metaphors we need to add, or rather recover, the most basic and literal aspect of voice that helps keep our search for the best metaphors on track: its physicality, its sound and rhythm and movement as connected to gesture--as Schultz notes in giving the understanding of voice in a Story Workshop class:

> Voice is gesture got into writing, voice is culture (including the personal background of the writer), voice contains the powers of the unconscious and the conscious and the possibility of style. Voice is also the movement of a telling/writing through time, everything that connects words and perceptions, the economy of which is to use what it needs and to leave out what it does not need. Voice is the articulation of all perceptions in verbal expression, written and oral, including the so-called nonverbal which we want to get into writing too. (Writing From Start to Finish 85)

Voice prompts, and is prompted by, gesture. In oral discourse, when the light finally hits us and we lift our head and say, "Aha! I see!"; when we skate a flat hand through the air as we tell a friend, "That Smokey, he is smooth"; when we raise a finger and tighten the sound and rhythm of our voice as we admonish someone, "Now pay attention this time!" we are seeing and hearing the mutual pull of gesture upon voice and voice upon gesture, the physicality of voice. There exists, then, a literal grounding for the metaphors of voice.

Simply put, voice is presence, the felt physical presence as well as those aspects usually associated with the term character or ethos, but as that character has been formed in the interaction with social forces (including those of language). In writing, we recognize voice when we hear the presence, recreated in every act of reading, of the speaker addressing an audience, her voice taking its place in conversation with other voices, including that of the reader.

It follows from this definition that voice need not be associated with an inherently romantic or "unrelated" notion of the self, and is certainly not limited to expressive or unanalytic modes of writing. Quite the contrary. The Story Workshop class places voice at the interface of social and personal forces, interacting to form and re-form each other, and uses the social dynamic of the classroom at every moment to prompt discoveries

about the organizing power of voice that makes conceptual leaps possible. I have already cited the Dallas results verifying the conceptual leaps made by Story Workshop students. I would also refer you to the examples of student writing that I have handed out. These examples represent high school and college students from a range of backgrounds--inner-city and suburban; remedial and non-remedial; beginning and advanced; minority and white--all taught using Story Workshop principles and techniques emphasizing voice as well as respect for the student's own strongly-felt content. You will see not only that these writers all exhibit a strong voice presence on the page but also that they are all moving toward an effective mixed diction in which standard features are incorporated along with vernacular forms, and that they all, in their own way, are conceptualizing and analyzing--even those skills-deficient writers traditionally seen as least sophisticated and who would be most likely to leave the classroom.

This brings us to our third source of impediments, those revealed as we attempt to translate theory into practice. In the classroom, impediments may arise at any moment, and we convey our acceptance--or lack of it--by everything we say and do. We may sincerely proclaim our acceptance of each student's voice and background, and we may offer definitions, metaphorical or otherwise, but without creating a firm context for its immediate apprehension, we seriously undercut the possibility of eliciting voice and of developing its many extensions. And voice <u>is</u> apprehensible, if not precisely definable, even by the youngest and least prepared of those seemingly ever-more-youthful and underprepared students entering our writing classes.

The Story Workshop class establishes and maintains this context for apprehension in a number of ways: by a semicircular arrangement of chairs

to enhance listening and use of immediate peer audience factors in oral and written exercises, by using a sequenced syllabus designed to move students from familiar basic forms that call forth naturally their own distinct and most-often-used voices to forms placing an increasing demand upon more conceptual capabilities, and, most centrally, by seeing the many voices in our classes as a source of possibility rather than as a problem impeding our instruction. Betty Shiflett has observed,

> Sameness can properly be seen only as a curse to writers struggling to speak in their own voices.
>
> For this reason, workshop differences of environmental circumstance, cultural, and ethnic background are welcomed, not "overcome," because they are integral to the student's voice and experience. If we accept his voice we accept his culture and background. We welcome it, wherever he comes from, and work to develop from there the many broadening and heightening cultural, imaginative, and linguistic possibilities. No workshop director should think for one minute that he could pretend to accept a student's voice and then trick or transform him into something standard, and still have authority and presence in that student's imaginative events. (149)

A basic Story Workshop format moves through a series of activities that build sequentially (see sheets handed out): a recall of vivid images or moments from work read or told in the previous class, oral reading of published models, recall and comment on oral reading, word exercises, oral telling, in-class writing of what was told orally, read-back of the in-class writing, and a final recall. (Obviously, this format is varied somewhat according to time constraints and other needs of specific classes.)

In each activity, the teacher coaches, creates the enabling atmosphere of guided discovery fostering each student's perceptions about her authentic telling and writing voice--and about the many variations possible that draw upon that voice, the many voices embedded in the one.

The coachings for voice are, along with those for seeing and meaning, always key--that is, they are given early and often in each activity. I have time to offer only a few of the most immediately useful and necessary voice-principled coachings as used in just a few portions of the format. A fuller discussion and list of the more sophisticated coachings may be found in Schultz's The Teacher's Manual for Writing From Start to Finish.

The coachings for voice are particularly significant in the oral reading portion of the class. Oral reading of models is a crucial step in developing the context for apprehending voice, since it gives students a more immediate and vivid experience of hearing the movement, rhythm, tone, syntactical patterns, and organizing power of voice than is possible in silent reading. They feel the physical presence of voice in persons engaged, as they are, in organizing their perceptions as they tell, thus connecting voice to meaning. In reading aloud (and in hearing) the language of both peers and more mature writers, students are also encouraged to experiment with a range of registers, content, and rhetorical techniques, and to incorporate the features of standard English in order to arrive at an effective use of mixed diction.

The teacher begins the activity by reading part of the selection aloud, to establish the sound and movement of the voice on the page, then hands the text to students one by one, letting each read a part of the selection. Early in the semester, to establish simultaneously a sense of peer audience and an ability to listen to one's own voice merged with the voice of the writer, the teacher instructs each reader to pick out someone across the semi-circle and address it to that person as a letter--"Dear Blair. . ."--in order to establish immediate audience awareness. Then, the teacher coaches the reader to "See it as you read. Let your mind's eye linger on anything that

catches your attention in what you are reading--any image, any action, any gesture, any object, any language, or anything else--and listen to your voice as you give it to Blair." As the reading proceeds, other coachings for voice (given along with those for seeing and meaning) may be particularly helpful in answering the needs of specific students: "Slow down. Give full value to each word." "Listen to your voice. Listen to your voice join with the voice of the teller coming to you from the page." "Take the time to see whatever the page gives you to see, and let it come into your voice. Exaggerate it (that is, heighten it)." Each of these coachings stresses the need for the student to listen inwardly. Developing this sense of an internal audience, this inner listening, is absolutely essential if the student is ever going to write in her own voice. She can't know it, and certainly can't write it, if she can't hear it--that is,if she never has a context in which it is <u>possible</u> for her to hear it.

The in-class oral telling, writing, and read-back is the center of the sequence of activities in a Story Workshop class. In the oral telling portion of the class, the teacher coaches students to see a place--or a moment from the how-to process, from the essay, etc.-- taking their attention. Students are coached to tell it across the semi-circle in their own language as they see it, to use naturally vivid and precise gestures to help them tell, and to be aware of what their audience needs to know in order to see it as clearly as they are seeing it. Later on, the teacher coaches, "Keep your eye on what you are telling, and listen to your voice telling it across the semi-circle," this in order to heighten the sense of internal listening.

In the in-class writing that follows oral telling, the teacher coaches students to pick out someone across the semi-circle to tell to (an audience choice which may be varied in number over the course of the semester):

"Write 'Dear Blair' at the top of the page, and tell it right to that person, beginning with what is taking your attention most strongly. Tell it as fast and as fully as you can. Keep your eye on what you are telling, and listen to your voice as you write. Just let your pen be an extension of your voice." Periodically, throughout the writing, the teacher offers side-coachings that re-affirm these directions.

In the read-back of in-class writing, the teacher coaches the student for sense of address, seeing, listening to her voice as she reads--all the things coached during oral reading of models and during in-class writing. The read-back allows students to hear immediately where the voice is coming through on the page forcefully, freely, clearly, coherently--and, by contrast, those places where it slides off base, becomes twisted in syntax, fails to hold the reader's attention, loses physical presence. With the coaching emphasis upon developing inner audience and listening sense this activity offers students a particularly strong impetus to apprehending the peculiar power, the precision and effectiveness, of their authentic voices. Furthermore, the whole sequence of activities and coachings encouraging discoveries about voice provides a supportive, demanding environment for experimentation and a deeply integrative base from which students build confidence and competence in the wide range of writing tasks they face in and out of school.

In closing, let me say that however unpolished our students may appear in thought or expression, they are extremely sophisticated in reading the politics of exclusion. Denial of voice is a denial of the very right to empowerment, and as Smitherman, Labov, and others have indicated, such denial can only result in further exclusion, in even more profound stratification of our society, in even louder chest-thumping about the

deepening literacy crisis. In order to refrain from mere lip service, we need to examine carefully the political and theoretical sources of impediments to true acceptance, and then adopt pedagogical strategies that consistently and forcefully enact our acceptance in the classroom. Only when we do so can we hope to bring our students out of the graveyard and bring ourselves back into the light from the blue dragon's cave.

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Basic Format of A Story Workshop Composition Class

The basic format of a Story Workshop® composition class includes the following sequence of activities, varied according to the needs of specific classes. For a full delineation of these activities, as well as the research and theory behind them, see John Schultz, *The Teacher's Manual for Writing From Start to Finish: The "Story Workshop" Basic Forms Rhetoric-Reader* (Upper Montclair, N.J.: Boynton/Cook, 1983).

Recall (of previous session's work)

Oral Reading of Models

Recall and Comment on Oral Reading

Word Exercises

Oral Telling

In-Class Writing

Oral Reading of In-Class Writing

Final Recall

Examples of Student Writing

The following excerpts were written by high school and college students from a wide variety of backgrounds taught by teachers using Story Workshop principles and techniques. Examples 1A and 1B are from ninth-grade students participating in an experimental remediation program (HECA) designed for inner-city, minority students with particularly intransigent skills problems. Students met with Tony Del Valle, a Story Workshop director from Columbia College, for ninety minutes every Saturday for twenty weeks. Comparison of pre- and post-test results at the end of that time showed a large advance in ideational development, fluency, spelling, and sense for the conventions of writing. Example 2 is taken from an essay by a ninth-grade student in a standard English I class taught by Jennifer Miller, a graduate student in the Columbia College Teaching of Writing master's program and a full-time teacher at a predominantly white, suburban high school. Examples 3 and 4 are excerpts from essays appearing in *Hair Trigger 9 & 10*. Example 3 was written in a freshman composition class, example 4 in an upper-level Prose Forms (advanced composition) class. All conventions of spelling, syntax, and so on have been retained.

Ex. 1A "Rockwell Gardens"

My mother has been in Rockwell Gardens for the past 18 years. She has seen the decline and fall of the projects. She has seen many difficult times for this place. My mother often refers to when she could go downstairs after a long day's work and sit on the bench in the fields and relax. Now there is a real chance of getting your head blown off. People change, she says, right along with the times; just as the conditions of living went down, crime went up.

Me, I've even witnessed the death of some foolish teenager who failed to realize he didn't own Rockwell Gardens, C.H.A. [Chicago Housing Authority] does; for that reason, and that reason only, people have been killed. In order to survive in the projects you must know certain people by face if not name; you must overlook instigators and be forever willing to accept what someone says to you or about you with no attitude or feeling about it. These things make the difference between getting killed and having the will and determination to get out with your full pride and dignity.

Ex. 1B "People"

There is this girl that lives in my neighborhood. Her name is Jackie. She is 18 years old and looks as if she was 30. She dropped out of school when she was 15 and now she has three children. There are rumors going around that she is pregnant again by a boy name Jerome. Jerome is 16, and he beats her as if he were her father, he takes the money she gets on welfare every month, and goes to spend it on drugs or other girls, and she knows about it. Jackie lives with her mother, named Sue. She and Sue are always arguing. Sue tells her she's stupid and she shouldn't let boys treat her they do, and Sue has even thrown her and the children out the house for like a week and then let them come back. Her children all had different fathers and none of them care. The children are always wandering around the building at all times of the night, and she never knows where they are. She has two boys and one girl. And she doesn't take good care of them. She sends them outside with nappy hair, dirty clothes, and it looks as if she never bathes them, and sometimes she looks even worse than they do. Some people feel that the best thing would be if someone took the children from her and gave them the care and attention they need.

Ex. 2 From an untitled essay

It doesn't seem possible that it's been three years since my first symptoms with Myasthenia Gravis. My symptoms were drooping eyelids, double vision, not being able to smile as widely as possible, slurred voice, difficulty raising my arms overhead, and my legs gave out on me. I can remember my first symptom. I was walking to the car from one of my brother's baseball games. As I was getting into the car I fell on the ground. I didn't know what was happening to me. . . .

After about three weeks, I ended up at the hospital again. My family and I were on vacation and I had trouble crossing the street to get to Ben Franklin. It felt like I was walking in quicksand. My parents decided that we'd go to see my relatives in Wisconsin and see what happens from there. My condition grew worse. The doctor immediately put me back in the hospital. This time I had a muscle byopsy taken. I was sent downstairs on a stretcher from my room. I was sent into a small operating room. The nurse was nice and so was the surgeon. It was hard to tell what they looked like underneath the blue gowns. The surgeon injected novicane into my leg about three times. He then cut a slit into the upper part of the left leg. The cut was about three inches long. He cut a little piece of muscle out of my leg. The muscle was small and narrow. It had little rings around it and was red and bloody. It looked like a slimy worm. The entire time I was trying to watch, but the nurse that was next to me kept putting the covers over my head. I didn't appreciate this at all. I was really interested in what was happening to me. I think anyone would like to know what was happening to you. It's a new experience to be in the hospital and have an operation. The surgeon stitched me back up and then put some surgical tape over the stitches. After he was finished I was wheeled upstairs. My doctor thought I should have a blood test taken to check my acetycholine receptor level. Acetycholine is a chemical released when the message is sent to the nerve ending from the brain. The acetycholine carries the message to a receptor site on the muscle. When enough receptor sites have been activated by acetycholine, the muscle contracts (What is Myasthenia Gravis? 1984, pp 1). If my doctor wouldn't have thought of having this done, the diagnosis would have taken longer. . . .

Ex. 3 From "Beyond Stereotypes"
by Mary Moritz

They can be found sleeping in doorways, on park benches or in train stations. Their outstretched hands beg for change as America's citizens make their way to work and back home again. These are the nation's homeless. Their actual numbers are disputed: recent Housing and Urban Development estimates put the figure at between 250,000 and 300,000 but the most commonly accepted figure, endorsed by the National Institute of Mental Health, is between 2 and 3 million (Holden 569). However, no matter how common a part of American scenery they have become, the nation as a whole appears to be ignorant and uncaring in regard to this class of people, largely unconcerned with their plight and the circumstances that force them to live on the streets.

A rheumey-eyed, scraggly-bearded wino slumping against a doorway. A dirt-caked mental patient, muttering to himself as he searches for a warm space to spend the cold winter night. These are the most commonly accepted stereotypes of the homeless. But the faces of the homeless are changing, becoming younger and more feminine. The average age of the homeless has sharply decreased to the mid-30s and the fastest growing segment is families, usually young women with two or three children (Holden 569). Furthermore, these new destitute often confute the stereotype: they don't sleep on park benches with shopping bags bulging with their worldly possessions. In fact they often appear no different than anyone else on the street, looking as if they are on their way to work or home. The new homeless are economically dispossessed: families who are not making ends meet, young men and women who have fallen on hard times, and single mothers who have been forced to choose between paying the rent and buying food for their children.

Kerry Alston looks like any other student as he makes his way to computer class. But when Alston leaves the classroom he returns to New York City's Fort Washington Armory where he shares a gymnasium-sized room with nine hundred other men. After losing his job as a security guard a year ago, and being forced out of his apartment by his roomate, Alston found himself with no other alternative than the shelter. Says Alston, "When I first got to the shelter, I wondered what I had gotten into. I had never been in anything like this--the odor, the dirt, people all over the floor. Then I realized I had no choice" (*Time* 27).

Rachel Hanson, 43, was a housewife in Anaheim, California, when her 19-year marriage ended in divorce a year ago. Her four bedroom house was foreclosed upon, and with no skills and minimal savings she was forced into living in a car in a campground with her three children. The family had been living there for eight months when shelter workers discovered them. "My life simply fell apart," Hanson says. "I had everything. Why I even had a microwave oven" (Stengel 27).

These are just two of the many case histories of America's homeless population. What is especially significant about them is that they depict the side of homelessness that many of us are unfamiliar with, whether by simple ignorance or by consciously looking the other way. Homeless people seem to be easier to deal with when they are thought of as derelicts and winos, as opposed to "regular folk," like the kid across the street or the family next door. Even President Reagan claims to believe that "the homeless are homeless, you might say, by choice" (Bassuck 45). Actually, Mr. Reagen is being too modest; his administration has had quite a bit to do with the situation . . .

EX. 4

From "Smells. An Essay"
by Sandra Goplin

In fifth grade, we spent a week studying the five senses. Afterwards, Mrs. Greenlee gave us a creative writing assignment. "Imagine," she instructed us, "that you woke up one day without the use of one of your senses. Write a composition about what it would be like to go for one whole day without seeing, or whatever." It occured to me that it would be nice to go for a whole day without seeing Mrs. Greenlee, with her blue hair and cat-eye glasses, standing behind that desk like a prison warden. She rapped loudly on her desk with her pointer to get our attention and added, "And do NOT write about losing your sense of smell. Stick to one of the REAL senses, one that would make a real difference in your day." It crossed my mind that it would be nice to go a whole day without smelling Mrs. Greenlee, too, because she had the worst breath of anyone I knew, and she wore so much old-lady perfume that you could hardly breathe when you stood next to her. Maybe she way afraid we would put that in our compositions if we wrote about the sense of smell.

Until fairly recently, Mrs. Greenlee's opinion--that the sense of smell isn't worth much consideration--was shared by the science world. Yet man has used his sense of smell and been affected by the smells around him as long as he has existed, like the rest of the animal world. Some historians even believe that man is still around today because of his smell--that "protoman" smelled so bad that no prehistoric beasts were interested in eating him.[1] Smell plays a perhaps less dramatic role in our lives today, but does that mean it's any less important to us? Americans spend over three billion dollars a year on perfume alone, and virtually every product we buy is scented, from cosmetics to furniture to automobiles.[2] Researchers now know that smells affect everything from our buying habits to our sex lives to our moods and how well we do our jobs.

Perhaps the effect of smell we are most familar with is the power it has to stir our memories. "Nothing awakens a reminiscence like an odour," Victor Hugo wrote, and it's a fact nearly anyone can attest to. You need only catch a whiff of burning leaves, or fresh lilacs, or the cologne of your first love to know that smell and memory are closely linked. When I smell cloves, I am magically carried back to the Christmases of my childhood, when my sister and I made ripe pomanders to give to our relatives. We poked whole cloves into the skins of firm, ripe oranges until they were completely covered, then attached satin ribbons so the things could be hung in the

recipients' closets to make their clothes smell nice. Our relatives thanked us profusely for the lovely gifts, but most never used the pomanders. We knew, too, because anyone who kept a clove pomander in their closet smelled like a walking spiceball. Those who told us they used their pomander, but didn't, smelled like liars, because they didn't smell like cloves. The smell of cloves also transports my mother back to her childhood, making her shudder as she recalls the days before Novocain, when a trip to the dentist meant gripping the arms of the chair and chewing cloves to ease the pain. When my grandmother smells cloves, she remembers the pharmacy where her father worked, where as a child she would perch herself on a salt barrel and watch him work while she sucked on penny candy.

Zoologist Arthur Hasler was haunted by the way salmon always returned to their birthplaces to spawn. When he returned to his childhood home in Utah after the Second World War, a rush of fragrant mountain air not only whisked him back twenty-five years, but also gave him the idea he needed to solve the salmon mystery. . . .

STORY WORKSHOP® Bibliography

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Story Workshop® is a servicemark of John Schultz, who originated (1965) and developed the method.